REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicant thanks the Office for indicating that claims 4, 8, 9, 29, and 40 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicant has so amended claims 4, 8, 9, 29, and 40 to place these claims, and their respective dependent claims (all pending dependent claims depend from one of these allowable independent claims), into condition for allowance. More particularly, claims 1-41 were originally pending. Claims 1, 14-20, 22-24, 27-28, 30-36, 38-39, and 41 have been canceled without prejudice. Claims 2-13, 25-26, 29, 37, and 40 have been amended to incorporate respective features of the canceled claims. For example, claims 4, 8, 9, 29, and have been rewritten in independent form to include all limitations of the respective base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 2, 3, and 5-13 were amended to depend from allowable claim 4 and/or to more particularly point out the subject matter of the invention. Claims 25 and 26 were amended to depend from allowable claim 29. Claim 37 was amended to depend from allowable claim 40. No claims have been added. Accordingly, claims 2-13, 21, 25-26, 29, 37, and 40 remain pending.

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Conclusion

In view of these claim amendments, reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejections and/or objections to pending claims 2-13, 21, 25-26, 29, 37, and 40, and allowance of the pending claims, is respectfully requested. Should any issue remain that prevents allowance of the application, the Office is encouraged to contact the undersigned prior or issuance of a subsequent Office Action.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dated: 04/14/04

By: _____

Brian G. Hart
Reg. No. 44, 421
(509) 324-9256

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